

HE PROMISE

Does it always pay to keep your word?

by PERCIVAL CHRISTOPHER
WREN

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Illustrated
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at any cost, was entirely and forever out of reach. And within a month of her coming out Oraba, Captain Alphonse Mallieu was obsessed with thinking of Adèle Duchesne by day and by night, sometimes with burning love, sometimes with burning hate, and sometimes with both.

What added fuel to the lambent flames of his passion was her complete indifference to him, her utter lack of interest in his love or his hate. When, in the dance, out riding, striding in the *Cercle* gardens, or sitting in the moonlight listening to the playing of the Legation band, he became ardent, she remained unmoved, uninterested, even unamused.

For the first time in his brilliant career as Don Juan, he entirely failed to communicate his ardor; found the woman completely unflappable.

When he showed this natural pique and anger, she still remained unmoved, uninterested, presenting Captain Alphonse Mallieu with a tactical problem, new, perplexing and exasperating beyond belief. Had he not a hit to an unbroken record of experience that won him whom he delighted to honor were delighted to be honored, and quickly responded, either in frightened love, or lovely fright?

only is what must have happened:

Now Captain Alphonse Mallieu of the French Foreign Legion hated his comrade-in-arms and brother officer, Captain Georges Duchesne, with a deep-seated bitter, lasting and malevolent hatred.

Captain Alphonse Mallieu was long and lithe, dark and saturnine, something of a human panther, a black panther. His subordinates cordially hated him; his equals and superiors disliked him; he inspired much more fear than love in the women upon whom he turned the light of his bitter, thin-lipped countenance.

In striking contrast, Captain Georges Duchesne was of the jovial sort, short and stocky and rotund in person, fair and smiling of countenance, expansive and cheerful in demeanor. His men loved him; he had a host of friends; women instinctively trusted him; and he had but the one enemy.

Also Captain Georges Duchesne had an extremely pretty wife — one whose type of Greek loveliness was Captain Alphonse Mallieu's ideal; also whose calm and cool indifference was his bane.

Combined in this Madame Duchesne, he found at once the ultimate provocation, the utterly unattainable; a pearl of great price which, at all costs, he must possess, and which

CAPTAIN ALPHONSE MALLIEU, extremely well known throughout the 19th Army Corps, the Army of Africa, died in an extraordinary manner, apparently without rhyme or reason, cause or occasion, and I verily believe that I am the only person alive who knows exactly how and why he died.

For it was I, and I only, who happened to see him go into the tent that night, and — after Captain Georges Duchesne had told me certain things — I who was able to reconstruct in my own mind what Captain Alphonse Mallieu did in that tent.

Nor is it a case of mere guessing and satisfying myself with the result of my ingenuity, as no other possible explanation or theory could fit the facts . . . Indeed, this and this

